

2015 Chapter Planning: *Leader Guide*

“Vision without action is a dream. Action without vision is simply passing the time. Action with vision is making a positive difference.”

Joel Barker, Author

Introduction

We hope you find this guide helpful as you engage your board in meaningful discussion and thoughtful planning about how to achieve your vision and *The Thrivent Way* in your local community.

Don't think of planning as a one-time event. It's an ongoing process meant to help you and your board:

- Identify and stay focused on what's most important to achieving your vision and goals.
- Create positive and meaningful experiences for your local members.
- Leverage the individual strengths, gifts, and connections of your board.
- Keep track of your progress, celebrate achievements, and make adjustments along the way.

On the next page you'll find a sample outline you can use to guide your board through the planning process. Feel free to follow the outline as is, use certain parts, or create your own process. What's important is the intentionality of purpose, goals, and action the process of planning creates. This is *your* chapter's plan! What it looks like and how you get there is up to you!

In addition to the sample outline, you may find the following resources helpful:

Resource:	Where to find:
Chapter planning template	thrivent.com > Member Involvement > Member Leader Resources > Leadership Roles > Chapter Leadership Board > Annual Chapter Planning .
Sample chapter plan	Page 9
Great ideas from chapters around the country	Page 10
Sample participant agenda	Page 13

Sample Leader Outline for Chapter Board Planning

Suggested Activity	Your Notes
1. Welcome and Introductions	
<p><i>Leading the activity:</i> Go around the room and ask people to share the following as they introduce themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Where they live • Role on the board • What are they most excited about? • What is their most pressing question or concern? <p>As people are talking, consider writing what they are excited about and their questions or concerns on a flip chart so you're able to refer back to them.</p>	
2. Icebreaker – How has generosity impacted your life?	
<p><i>Preparation:</i> Before the meeting send an email to board members asking them to think of a time in their life when they were the recipient of another person's generosity. Ask them to bring an object to the meeting that represents this generosity. (If bringing the object isn't feasible, perhaps a photograph can be taken and then shared at the meeting.)</p> <p><i>Leading the activity:</i> Go around the group and ask each board member to share their generosity story and the significance of the object they brought with them.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> After everyone has shared their story, consider taking a group photograph of all the objects! Keep the photo as inspiration and a reminder of the grace and generosity you have experienced in your own lives.</p>	
3. Devotion or Reflection	
<p><i>Preparation:</i> Decide whether you'll lead the devotion yourself or ask someone else to lead it.</p>	

Suggested Activity	Your Notes
<p><i>Leading the devotion:</i></p> <p>We all just shared our personal stories on how generosity has impacted our lives. We are grateful and God has been good to us. We have a lot to be thankful for. This is expressed beautifully in Psalm 100:</p> <p><i>Psalm 100</i></p> <p><i>Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He, who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.</i></p> <p>What does this mean? We've talked about being recipients of generosity. As a board, we have resources and talents that enable us and other members to strengthen Christian communities by being wise with money and leading generous lives. We're blessed to be a blessing!</p> <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <p>These passages speak to what we are called to do as Christians. Choose one that you feel reflects generosity, or how our efforts in the community are not in vain – they will multiply and we are blessed!</p> <p><i>Matthew 5:15-16</i></p> <p><i>No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.</i></p> <p><i>II Corinthians 9:9-10</i></p> <p><i>As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.</i></p>	

Suggested Activity	Your Notes
4. Begin the Conversation – <i>The Thrivent Way</i> key questions	
<p><i>Leading the activity:</i> You want to create an environment for rich conversation <i>before</i> you actually begin to plan. Start by reflecting on the previous year’s accomplishments in light of Thrivent’s mission.</p> <p>Read <i>The Thrivent Way</i> aloud:</p> <p><i>We are a membership organization of Christians, and our members are our owners. Our purpose is to serve our members and society by guiding both to be wise with money and live generously.</i></p> <p>Here are some questions to pose to the group. Remember to allow time for your board members to reflect on them. Silence might feel uncomfortable, but it’s important to give people a little time to gather their thoughts before responding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a membership organization, all members are owners. What have we done in this past year that’s helped people have an owner’s <i>voice</i> in the work of our chapter? What might we do to strengthen that voice this year? • When we think about <i>strengthening our community</i>, what are you most proud of from this past year? What are some of the key needs in our community this coming year? • How has our chapter helped more people <i>be wise with money</i>? Why is this important? What else could we consider doing? • How has our chapter <i>guided others to live generously</i>? How could we inspire even more people? 	

Suggested Activity	Your Notes			
5. Set the Stage for Planning				
<p><i>Preparation:</i> Bring copies of the chapter planning template for each board member. The template was included with this mailing and is also on Thrivent.com. Go to Member Involvement > Member Leader Resources > Leadership Roles > Chapter Leadership Board > Annual Chapter Planning.</p> <p><i>Leading the activity:</i> Ask participants to look at pages one and two of the chapter planning template. Talk about the essential elements of a plan, including <i>mission, goals</i> and <i>strategies</i> (page 1). Then, look at the sample plan (page 2) and review <i>tactics</i>.</p> <p>We've used the analogy of taking a trip. You could personalize it by telling a story about a trip <i>you've</i> taken. The important thing is to draw the parallels from your story to the five elements of planning: mission, goals, strategies, tactics, and measures.</p>				
6. Brainstorm Strategies and Tactics –Let the planning begin!				
<p><i>Preparation:</i> Consider using the following exercise to prioritize your ideas and ensure that your actions connect back to your chapter's mission and goals.</p> <p>Depending on the number of people in your group, this activity can take anywhere from one to two hours. At the end, you'll have sorted out all your group's ideas into strategies and tactics, so that you can begin to plan for action in a focused way.</p> <p>You'll need to prepare the following materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-it/sticky notes • Markers • Masking tape, string or another way to mark horizontal lines on the wall • Large wall (or very large sheet of paper) with two horizontal lines dividing it into three parts, labeled from top to bottom: Mission/Goals, Strategy, Tactics • Colored sticky dots 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sample wall:</i></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Mission/Goals</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Strategies</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Tactics</td> </tr> </table>	Mission/Goals	Strategies	Tactics
Mission/Goals				
Strategies				
Tactics				

Suggested Activity	Your Notes
<p><i>Leading the activity:</i></p> <p>Step 1: Review chapter mission and goals. Refer back to page one of the chapter planning template and re-read <i>The Thrivent Way</i> and the two goals that all chapters share. Post them in the top section of your wall chart.</p> <p>Step 2: Participants brainstorm strategies Hand out two sticky notes and a marker to each participant. Ask each participant to write on the sticky notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two strategies (one per sticky note) you think this group could and should take on to accomplish your mission and goals. • These can be small or large scale, short- or long-term, big dreams or smaller actions that are connected to your goals and Thrivent’s mission. <p>Step 3: Participants place strategies on wall One at a time or all at once, participants place their sticky notes on the board in the strategy section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader can help the group discuss where various ideas should go. As you go, try placing each idea near any other ideas that seem similar. • Don’t worry about getting everything in the perfect place right now. As you continue with the next steps, you might change your mind about where something belongs. <p>Step 4: Sort your strategies Let everyone step back and look at the wall. It’s exciting to see how many ideas your group has!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort and gather sticky notes into groups of similar or related ideas. • This should be done in conversation with the group, so people can clarify their ideas and discuss similarities and differences, if needed. • Feel free to add or revise your stick notes as needed. 	

Suggested Activity	Your Notes
<p>Step 5: Assess your strategies</p> <p>Based on what you have, ask the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there some strategies where the group seems to have more ideas or a stronger interest? • Are they connected to our mission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To strengthen our community? ○ To help others be wise with money? ○ To inspire others to live generously? • Are we creating experiences for members to deepen their connections with Thrivent? • Will we engage people of different ages and interests? • Are we cultivating and inspiring current and future leaders? • Are there meaningful opportunities for our Thrivent Financial representatives to connect with members of the local community? <p>Step 6: Prioritize your strategies</p> <p>It's best to focus on two or three strategies in a given year. If your chapter has a number of strategies you're considering, and you need to decide which ones to pursue, this activity can help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give everyone the same number of sticky dots. (You determine the number based on the size of the group and the number of ideas). • Ask group members to "vote" on the ideas they like by sticking dots by the idea. They can put more than one of their dots on the same idea. • The group will be able to visually see the ideas that have greater appeal based on the number of dots next to an idea. • As a group, prioritize the strategies with the most dots. <p>Step 7: Brainstorm and prioritize tactics</p> <p>Repeat steps two through six above, this time for <i>tactics</i> that support the strategies you identified. For tactics, start by handing out <i>five</i> sticky notes to each participant.</p>	

Suggested Activity	Your Notes
<p>Step 8: Document your final strategies and tactics</p> <p>After you’ve identified the strategies and tactics, be sure to document them on the chapter planning template.</p>	
<p>7. Identify how to Measure Success</p>	
<p><i>Leading the activity:</i></p> <p>For each of the tactics you identified in your chapter plan, brainstorm how you’ll measure success. Get specific whenever possible. Think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many members do you hope participate? How many non-members? • How many FRs do you plan to involve? • What type of local visibility do you hope to get? • If it’s fundraising, what’s the leverage ratio on funds you hope to achieve? 	
<p>8. Celebrate your work and wrap-up!</p>	
<p><i>Leading the activity:</i></p> <p>Good planning is exciting but difficult work! Before you close the meeting, be sure to recognize the groups’ accomplishment. You’ve just laid the groundwork for a successful year. Congratulations!</p>	

Sample Chapter Plan – West Franklin County Chapter

Strategies	Tactics	Measures of Success
1. Help members and potential members be wise with money through hosting educational events. Efforts will be made to target audiences of varying life stages and financial challenges through these educational events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host educational events in churches (through the Advocates) in addition to locations outside of churches. ▪ Gather attendee names and contact information for members and non-members. ▪ Thrivent FR will lead events and will distribute Thrivent-branded resources specific to the needs of attendees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 events (seminars) sponsored by our chapter ▪ 50 total attendees, members and nonmembers ▪ 2 FRs involved
2. Engage members and nonmembers in Thrivent-sponsored events that address housing and social issues. A. Sponsor and promote “Shack City” (night for high school youth to experience and learn about homelessness and affordable housing) B. Meet funding and volunteer requirements for Thrivent Builds housing grant C. Fund CAIC events that address homelessness and affordable housing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gather attendee names, addresses, and contact information for members and non-members alike. ▪ Provide assistance with fund-raising for Thrivent Builds. ▪ Recruit volunteers for the Thrivent Builds construction. Collect contact information at all Thrivent Builds events. ▪ Promote new strategies with Advocates and past recipients of CAIC funding; verify how Thrivent sponsorship was publicized at various events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 65 youth, many from outside of the Lutheran community participate in “Shack City” ▪ 75 members and nonmembers work on TBs projects ▪ 20 total CAIC events are sponsored
3. Develop and nurture relationships with members and non-members in our community to build awareness and understanding of Thrivent. A. Host Thrivent Day at the Columbus Clippers stadium on June 12, 2012 B. Increase # of congregational advocates C. Train and nurture advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendee names and contact information will be gathered through ticket sales and multiple drawings held during the game. ▪ Thrivent information and TB literature will be distributed by FRs hosting a table. ▪ Thrivent’s name will be visible on display screens throughout the stadium. ▪ Review congregational advocate role and other pertinent information such as chapter goals, Thrivent Choice, Thrivent Builds, etc. ▪ Board meeting dates will be provided and Advocates will be encouraged to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 250 attend via Thrivent-sponsored ticket sales ▪ 10 new advocates ▪ 4 training sessions ▪ 2 Advocates attend each Board meeting

Chapter Success Stories

Jars Full of Joy

RIESEL, TEXAS—Sharon Koester-Raesener, a member of the Waco Area Chapter of Thrivent Financial, cooked up the idea of making jars of homemade dewberry jelly after hearing several older members of the chapter talk about how much they love the fruit. She suggested providing jelly and cobblers for the older members, as well as for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. But she knew she had to get the youth on board, because the hard-to-find berries grow wild along ditches and creeks. It took about six hours over two evenings for Trinity Lutheran Church’s teens to gather 10 gallons of berries. The youth turned the fruit over to Trinity women who made cobblers, then cooked and jarred several cases of jelly. A few pints were donated to a Thrivent Financial sponsored auction to benefit Trinity’s preschool; the rest were packaged and sent overseas. The chapter provided seed money to cover the cost of jars, ingredients and shipping.

Service in September

APPLETON, WISCONSIN—More than 400 members of seven Lutheran congregations fanned out across the area and canvassed the community with service. The day—a partnership between the East Outagamie County Chapter of Thrivent Financial and Fox Valley Lutheran Schools—gave Thrivent members and Lutheran congregants a chance to show their commitment to community while raising awareness for the sponsoring organizations. Participating churches selected a service project of their choice and recruited volunteers. Events included cleaning in parks, cemeteries and along highways; visiting with residents at an assisted living facility; and working at a car show. As added incentive, the Thrivent chapter offered a \$500 gift to congregations with 50 or more volunteers.

ABC’s of Giving

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO—About 90% of students at Irish Elementary School live below the poverty line, and teachers often purchase school supplies with money out of their own pockets. Thrivent member Andrea Musselman wanted to help the teachers. She approached Thrivent Financial



representatives Ryan Behm and Nancy Behm with an idea for Thrivent Cares Members Share, a ministry opportunity founded by the Behms that helps Thrivent members give back to the community. A new project is selected every 90 days. To help the teachers, about 50 families raised more than \$6,000, and the Behms also contributed. Items donated included six magnetic classroom white boards, individual student white boards, musical recorders, pencil sharpeners, and headphones and CD players for classroom listening centers. Every member of the school staff also was given a \$25 restaurant gift card.

When a Sale Is Not a Sale

MARYSVILLE, MICHIGAN—There was something missing from the Light of Christ Lutheran Church rummage sale—price tags. The church, along with the St. Clair County Chapter of Thrivent Financial, invited the community to browse, and then take what they needed or wanted from the sale without the expectation to pay. Without charging a penny, the event raised nearly \$1,150, and the chapter added another \$500. Many of the rummagers simply came to leave donations, 100% of which went to a local homeless and battered women’s shelter.

Getting Outside Together

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS—Last May, four churches served by the Washington-Madison County Chapter were among those who gathered at Guley Park in Fayetteville for Churches Outside Together, an evening of food, fellowship and music. Nine local churches were invited to attend, and the contemporary Christian music was provided by members from five of the churches. About 300 attendees enjoyed the music while dining on barbecue pork sandwiches made by Thrivent Financial representative Josh McClard. The Washington-Madison County Chapter supplied the pork, drinks, paper goods and more.

Imagine the Power of More

MANHATTAN, KANSAS—The friendly competition was strong as the six Lutheran churches that make up the Riley County Chapter gathered food for Flint Hills Breadbasket, a community food network. Thrivent Financial Representative Dave Mack challenged the churches to fill the back of his truck with donations. Each church had a shopping cart to fill, and the church that collected the most food received a lighted manger scene to display outside. The chapter also had an entry in the mayor's Christmas parade to highlight the collection efforts. They filled his truck twice and gathered 2,400 pounds of food.

Just Shred It!

LIVERMORE, CALIFORNIA—Coffee, pastries and a sense of security. That's what drew 152 community members to two document shredding stations set up by the South Alameda Chapter of Thrivent Financial last Sept. 15. Shredding trucks chewed through thousands of personal documents, while those in line sipped and munched on snacks. Thrivent Financial representative Steve Gregerson was on hand at both events to spread the word about the chapter's identity theft prevention workshop the following month and the membership benefit Thrivent Financial offers to help.

Big-Hearted Run

MACOMB, MICHIGAN—The first-ever Run the Plank: Three Miles of Faith 5K Run/Walk, sponsored in part by the Great Lakes Region of Thrivent Financial and the North Macomb County Chapter of Thrivent Financial, drew more than 900 people for the race and nearly 1,700 for the family festival that followed. The event was organized by three churches along the Romeo Plank Road corridor—Immanuel and St. Peter Lutheran and St. Isidore Catholic. The North Macomb County Chapter of Thrivent Financial and four Thrivent Financial representatives also helped with the event, which raised more than 9,500 pairs of shoes for Soles4Souls and \$20,000 for the Macomb Intermediate School District Homeless Education Project. The project provides backpacks and school supplies for more than 1,000 homeless students of Macomb County.



A Foundation for Reconciliation

SIoux FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA—Natanael Lizarazo, pastor of First Lutheran Church and a member of the Thrivent East Minnehaha County Chapter, worked for five months along with the advocacy group Translators of Culture to create a community-wide project that embraced stories of war, loss and reconciliation from refugees, immigrants and veterans. Translators collected artwork and stories and etched or painted them onto bricks. On Make a Difference Day (Oct 27) the community joined together to hand lay the bricks and create a pathway of reconciliation and healing in the newly dedicated community garden on the campus of Avera McKennan Hospital. The Thrivent East and West Minnehaha County Chapters donated a total of \$1,500 to the project.

Get Gardening!

PERU, ILLINOIS—On April 27, about 20 members of Thrivent Financial rolled up their sleeves and dug into the third annual Garden Affair hosted by the Women of the ELCA from St. John’s Lutheran Church. About 200 attendees enjoyed expert speakers, a plant sale and hands-on workshops, including a popular Potting Party led by Pam Camey, a Thrivent Financial representative and master gardener. Proceeds from speaker and workshop fees, food, raffle ticket and plant sales totaled more than \$3,100, including \$400 from the LaSalle County Chapter of Thrivent Financial. Proceeds were divided among St. John’s Lutheran youth group and three local charities. In addition to donating her time, Camey donated \$250 to pay for Potting Party supplies.

Sewing Lessons in the Caribbean

LORING/WHITEWATER, MONTANA – The well-known proverb – "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime" – works with sewing, too. Thrivent members from the Blaine/Phillips County Chapter and others who belong to the Quilts Around the Border Quilt Club, took their love of sewing, and a lot of supplies, to the Caribbean island of Dominica, where they spent a week teaching local women how to sew. The quilt club raised money, including \$2,000 from Thrivent Financial, to help purchase sewing supplies. Local churches and others also donated money to purchase sewing machines. The club has continued to send supplies to help a teacher pass along to her students the sewing skills she learned.



Walk the Walk

AUSTIN, MINNESOTA—After a 4-year-old Thrivent member lost part of his leg in a lawnmower accident, Thrivent Financial representatives Joel Morrison and Martha Vrieze Morrison wanted to help. With his



left leg cut off at the knee, the young member needs a prosthetic adjustment every six months and a new prosthetic every two years as he grows. More than 40 Thrivent members and four Thrivent chapters—Mower County, Austin, Freeborn County and Albert Lea—combined efforts in a benefit that raised nearly \$58,000. The event featured food, auctions, a bean bag tournament and music by Six Mile Grove, a band made up of Thrivent members.

2015 Chapter Planning: *Participant Agenda*

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1. Welcome and Introductions

- Please share:
 - Your name
 - Where you live
 - Your role on the board
 - What are you most excited about?
 - What is your most pressing question or concern?

2. Icebreaker

3. Devotion

4. *The Thrivent Way*: Key Questions

- What have we done in this past year that’s helped people have an owner’s voice in the work of our chapter? What might we do to strengthen that voice this year?
- When we think about strengthening our community, what are you most proud of from this past year? What are some of the key needs in our community this coming year?
- How has our chapter helped more people be wise with money? Why is this important? What else could we consider doing?
- How has our chapter inspired others to live generously? How could we inspire even more people?

5. Let the planning begin!

6. Wrap-up